

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. **10/751,478**
Response filed March 26, 2007
Reply to OA dated November 24, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-7 and new claim 8 are pending.

The amendments and new claims are supported in the specification as follows: Claim 1: (p.5, text lines 23-24 and 27-28; p.6, text lines 16-19); Claim 6:(claim dependency) and new claim 8: (FIGS. 1(a), 2(a) and 3(a)). The applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated November 24, 2006.

Claims 1, 2 and 5 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent No.5,717,482 to Akutsu et al. (Office Action, p.2)

The claimed invention has been further distinguished the from the references. **None of the cited references show a housing with a recess for a rotatable chuck, the chuck also having a hollow for a movable nozzle with a hole for gas discharge.** Claim 1 has been amended to recite the housing which structurally distinguishes over all cited references. Fig. 1-5 of Akutsu show chuck 2 on top of tilt stage 1 without any recessed portions.

In addition to the housing, the claimed invention differs from the disclosure of Akutsu in that the claimed chuck is solid, while the chuck of Akutsu has holes for the intra-chuck vacuum mechanism 15. New claim 8 recites this difference.

The Office Action commented in the **Response to Arguments** section on p.5, that the limitation ““substrate is held over an upper surface of the chuck in a non-contact state by discharging

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gas from the nozzle hole” is contrary to the Applicant’s structure which has pawls 5.” **This limitation is not in fact contrary to the Applicant’s structure** as explained in the specification on p.3, lines 22-28 and p.8, lines 4-9. In fact the pawls 5 only contact the substrate during specific operations like loading, described on p.3, lines 11-21. **The device of Akutsu and the claimed invention operate completely differently, because Akutsu uses a vacuum and the claimed invention uses gas discharge.** Akutsu discloses intra-chuck *vacuum* mechanism 15 and the intra-wafer pin *vacuum* mechanism 11, while the disclosed *gas discharge* nozzle hole 7 is not a vacuum and thus a substrate can be *held in a non-contact state by gas discharge*.

Simply put, since no reference discloses or even suggests the claimed housing with a recess for a rotatable chuck, it is logically impossible that Akutsu could make obvious the structure now claimed.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection be reconsidered in light of the amendments to claim 1 and withdrawn.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akutsu et al. in view of US Patent No. 5,896,877 to Pirker. (Office Action, p.4)

Pirker relates to the pawls and is combined with Akutsu to reject claim 3. This rejection is now addressed since the device of claim 1 is distinguished structurally from Akutsu. The differences now claimed will overcome Akutsu and the combination of Akutsu and Pirker.

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It is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akutsu et al. in view of US Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0052392 A1 to Nakamura et al.
(Office Action, p.5)

Claims 6 and 7 are directed toward a fork for holding the substrate. Again, this rejection is addressed since the device of claim 1 is now distinguished structurally from Akutsu. The differences claimed will overcome Akutsu and the combination of Akutsu and Nakamura.

It is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 1-3 and 5-8 as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

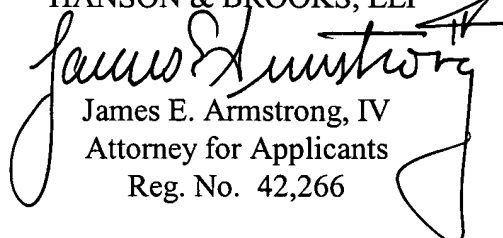
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If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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